

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

SURGICAL PATHOLOGY AND THERAPEUTICS. By JOHN COLLINS WARREN, M.D., Professor of Surgery in Harvard University ; Surgeon to the Massachusetts General Hospital. Illustrated. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1895.

The surgery of the present day is distinguishing itself from the surgery of the past few decades, not so much in the perfecting of the mechanical art as in the development of surgical pathology ; and the surgeon of the future, if he would embellish himself with something extrinsic to his art, will choose to study the histogenesis of sarcoma in preference to the branches of the external circumflex division of the profunda femoris artery. Surgical pathology is teaching the surgeon that carcinoma is not a lump to cut off, but that it is an insidious, spreading disease, and that it more closely resembles erysipelas than it resembles a wart. With the growth of surgical pathology in this country, American surgery is in less danger of sustaining the setback which it received at Washington a few years ago, when one of its champions announced before a great meeting of surgeons that he opened the axilla in breast cases only when he could feel through the skin that the glands were enlarged. It is one of the functions of such works as that which lies before us to encourage in the surgeon the use of the "microscopic eye" as an aid to the finger.

The book opens with two chapters on the general principles of bacteriology and surgical bacteria. The following six chapters are given to the subjects of hyperæmia and inflammations. These latter are divided into simple and infective, and are discussed from the standpoint of modern pathology. The chapter on the process of repair is excellent. The same may be said of the two following on gangrene and shock. The general subject of fever is treated very elaborately ;

and the thirteen succeeding chapters are devoted to the special surgical infections. Three chapters are given to tuberculosis, the first of which deals with the subject in a general way, and the other two with tuberculosis of the joints and soft parts. Non-tuberculous bone diseases are given a special section. Lastly is treated the important subject of tumors. The work closes with a chapter on aseptic and antiseptic surgery, and an appendix.

The author, in addition to producing a scientific work, has added many observations of a general character pertaining to the domain of physiology, history, and poetry. The chapter, for example, on hospital gangrene reads much like a war article in the *Century Magazine*. The horrors of Andersonville are graphically described; and the pathetic appeal made to the Richmond government by Lieutenant-Colonel D. T. Chandler, of the Confederate service, begging that no more prisoners be sent to Andersonville, would certainly touch the coldest heart.

The chapter on snake-bite is rich in snake-lore. We are informed that "in 1881 the number of snakes killed for the bounty offered by the British government amounted to 254,968." Of the thrilling snake-story in which is related how the

"Wretched Sabellus by a seps was stung;
Fixed to his leg with deadly death it hung:"

the author remarks, "The direful effect of serpent-poisoning upon the tissues is graphically described by Lucan ("Pharsalia," book ix), who records the somewhat exaggerated stories of Cato's soldiers in their march through the Libyan desert. (This passage is also interesting as being probably the first occasion in which the peritoneum is mentioned in poetry.)" Then follows Rowe's translation of the verses. All of this is, of course, very interesting, but when the student or the physician takes down a volume to seek for knowledge on the subject of snake-bite, he is not concerned for the "wretched Sabellus," nor the "exaggerated stories" of Cato's soldiers, nor does he think that the first appearance of the peritoneum in poetry has anything to do with the case.

In the chapter on phosphorus-necrosis, the following sentence serves to illustrate the broadness of the author's technical learning: "The chemical composition employed consists of phosphorus and chlorate of potassium with particles of ground flint to assist friction, a coloring agent, and the best quality of Irish glue."

It is to be regretted that a place is given in this work on surgical pathology to endorse the nitric acid method of Chiene for detecting "the presence of cancer in an amputated breast."

We can hardly agree with the author that "an ulcer is a solution in continuity of the skin or the mucous membrane which shows no tendency to heal," for is it not so that an ulcer does show a natural tendency to heal?

The work is systematically arranged, and, compared with most works in the English language on the same subject, it contains a large amount of information. Comparatively little space is given to therapeutics, and it is interesting to learn that at last a book has been written in which the author states that, though the sulphide of calcium is supposed to possess unusual virtues in the checking of circumscribed suppurations, he has never seen any satisfactory results from its use.

Space is not encumbered with the omnipresent illustration of the act of transfusion, with its two strong arms and rubber connections. Even when this old method had become obsolete, surgical authors continued to give it space in their books, as, for example, the "Modern Surgery" of Roberts fully describes the method which even at the time of its publication was practically antiquated, and scarcely mentions the method of saline infusion, which was then fully in vogue. So it is with satisfaction that we read in Warren's work that "transfusion is now abandoned, but there may be resorted to, in cases of shock attended with great loss of blood, infusion of warm salt solution, etc."

The patriotic student will find on page 386 a reference to the scientific work of Dr. O. W. Holmes, who has never received from the medical profession the honors to which he is entitled, as he has

from his literary *confrères*; and with very natural Bostonese pride the author pays the memory of the worthy doctor a just compliment in referring to his work on puerperal fever and erysipelas.

A most striking and very excellent feature of this book is its illustrations. Without exception, from the point of accuracy and artistic merit, they are the best that we have ever seen in a work of the kind. A large number are colored. Many of those representing microscopic pictures are so perfect in their coloring and detail as almost to give the beholder the impression that he is looking down the barrel of a microscope at a well-mounted section. Plate IV, illustrating gangrene of the leg following ligature of the femoral artery for popliteal aneurism, must be designated as simply beautiful. If the femoral was not tied by an artist, at least the picture was made by one.

The value of the text is enhanced by being interspersed with brief reports of illustrative clinical cases printed in smaller type.

The publishers have done their work well. The type is large and clear, and the paper is smooth and strong. The book is a beautiful example of the *fin de siècle* printer's art.

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